
M 240

Et vidi angelum stantem in nube et clamavit... (apoc.XIX,17)

Manuscript on vellum, written and illuminated in France in the first half of the 13th century, c.1226-1234, for Blanche of Castilé and her son, St. Louis.

1 full-page miniature, 56 small miniatures in medallions.
8 leaves (14-3/4 x 10-3/8 inches).

fo. XVIth cent. brown stamped cf. in br. mor. box case lettered: "The Apocalypse - Illuminated manuscript - 13th century".

Text: Commencing with Apocalypse Chapter XIX verse 17, and ending with Chapter XXI verse 4, the text of the Biblical quotations is written by the margin opposite the illustrating miniature. Each verse is followed by a moralized explanation. The text is a fragment of the Moralized Bible in the Library of the Cathedral at Toledo, Spain. At the time of its removal it was mis-bound, so that to conform to the correct textual sequence the leaves should be re-sewn in the following order: 1, 6, 7, 4, 5, 2 and 3. The text lacks one leaf, which contained the end of the Apocalypse.

Decoration: The roundels which enclose the 56 small miniatures are set in two vertical rows on the page. Prof. Morey (Morgan Exhib. Cat. 1934, p.xvi) relates them to stained glass. Gold and blue predominate in the color scheme, with rose and light green touches.

Of special interest is the last leaf, in the upper half of which are the seated figures of St. Louis, King of France, and his Mother, Blanche of Castille. Below, a monk is seen dictating the text to an artist.

The subject of the miniatures alternates as does the text, i.e. first a depiction of a Bible quotation, then the artist's conception of the explanation.

XIX, 17-21; XX, 1, 2, 3.

1. The Angel calls the fowls.
2. The preachers (typified by the Angel) the righteous and the damned.
3. The beast and the kings.
4. The beast, signifying Anti-christ, and the kings, its disciples war on the Christians.
5. Capture of the beast & casting it into lake of fire.
7. St. John, and the Angel with the chain binding Satan.
8. Christ destroys the Devil.

The Psalter M 185 in Phila. Lewis coll. & M 92 should be examined for definite localization of this manuscript.
XX, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12.

1. The judges enthroned and the souls of the martyrs.
2. The righteous who die confessed will escape the pains of hell.
3. Satan, loosed from prison, deceives Gog and Magog.
5. The evil devoured by heavenly fire.
6. God’s vengeance towards infidels heretics and persecutors of martyrs.
7. The great white throne, and him from whose face earth and heaven fled, and the dead, small and great, stand before God.
8. The throne, Holy Church; those who fled, the avaricious and proud.

XX, 12, 13; XXI, 1-4.

1. The sea gives up the dead, who are judged from the books.
2. Heretics and false christians damned.
3. A new heaven and earth, and John sees the Holy City adorned as a bride.
4. The renewal of heaven & earth signifies the rejoicing of the angels and Holy Church over the Resurrection.
5. A great voice out of heaven saying: the tabernacle of the Lord is with men.
6. The tabernacle is the flesh of Christ.
7. God wipes away the tears.
8. The reward for tribulations for the love of God.

XXI, 5-9

1. "And he said unto me, Write for these words are true and faithful!"
2. His words and writings lead us to heaven.
3. Giving to those athirst from the fountain of life.
4. The living water is the glory which comes to the faithful.
5. The fearful, unbelievers, abominable, murderers, etc. are ordered to the lake of brimstone.
6. The seven kinds of sinners, if they die without confession, shall suffer death.
7. The angel with the vial calls to show John the Bride of the Lamb.
8. He who renounces the world to serve God is the Bride of Christ.

XXI, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22.

1. The angel shows John the Holy City, her light like unto jasper and crystal.
2. Good works and faith also shine forth.
3. The wall of the city with 12 foundations, in them the names of the 12 apostles and the Lamb.
4. The faith of Christ, the 12 patriarchs, and true knowledge.
5. The wall was of jasper and the city of pure gold.
6. The priests should be as firm in faith and the precious stones are the patriarchs & prophets.
7. The twelve pearl gates and street of gold.
8. The clear and virtuous priests; the church.
f. 6

XXI, 24, 27; XXII, 1, 2.

(1) The kings of the earth bring their glory.
(2) The religious will obtain their glory from above.
(3) The defilers ejected from the City.
(4) Only the righteous enter heaven.
(5) The angel shows John the river of the water of life proceeding out of the throne of God.

f. 7v

C. Baptism

G. Tree of life

XXII, 10, 11, 14-17.

(1) The angel admonishes John not to seal the book of the filthy and the righteous.
(2) Preachers must preach the truth or be punished.
(3) The blessed wash their cloaks in the blood of the Lamb.
(4) Those who work in the faith and do good wash their cloaks in the blood.
(5) The righteous enter the gates of the city.
(6) The wicked souls are prevented from entering heaven.
(7) Jesus, the morning star, sends his angel.
(8) The doctrine of the church is as the morning star.

f. 8

Upper half:
A queen - Blanche of Castile
A young king - Saint Louis IX
Lower half:
The author
The scribe

Binding: French 16th century (c.1500) stamped leather binding. In brown morocco case lettered: "The Apocalypse: Illuminated manuscript - 13th century."

History: The manuscript was executed in France, about 1226-1234, for Blanche of Castile and her son St. Louis, possibly as a gift to the Cathedral of Toledo, where the major part of the MS. now is. It was removed from Toledo before 1539, its absence being recorded in an inventory of the Cathedral Treasury of that date. The present binding, dating from c.1500, was on the leaves when they were in the library of the Seigneur des Granges et de la Majorie, whose name occurs on f.1 with his arms d'azur à la bande d'or. These arms were born in 1593 by Francois de la Majorie when he married Anne de Turenne (Cf. Anselme, Tome IX, 2nd part, p.398).

In the XVIIIth century it passed to a member of the de Anton family; in 1838 to Alois de Chievres (1828-1904) then to his son-in-law, vicomte George Marie Louis de Hillerin (1842-1892); then to Otto Weiner, Bourdariat. Purchased from Ludovic Badin, 1906.

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The close stylistic relation to M.92 which has an Office of the Dead for the monastery of St.Magloire, Paris, substantiates Delisle's surmise (Bible Moralisée, text vol.) that M.240 and its component parts were produced in a Paris monastic institution. Comparable MSS were also produced at Noyon.


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The Pierpont Morgan Library Exhibition Catalogue, 1934, p.27, No.51, pl.47.


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For printed text or notices of this MS. see:


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Paris, salle des Gens d'Armes de Palais
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Oct. 1920-Jan. 1921, Paris
No. 231 p. 119.

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Démographie des mois de France,
1ère partie, Archives de l'art français, t. XV, 1928, p. 19

Claude Marks, Pilgrims, Heretics and Lovers, (New York, 1975), fig.91

Morgan MS. No. M.240

For printed text or notices of this MS. see:


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